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**STATE ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT ISSUES DUST AND AIR
QUALITY HEALTH ADVISORY IN DOÑA ANA COUNTY**

(Santa Fe, NM) – The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Air Quality Bureau along with the City of Las Cruces and Doña Ana County is alerting all citizens of Doña Ana County of the risks associated with dust storms.

A combination of weather conditions, features of the natural environment, and human activity can cause dust storms. High winds can raise large amounts of dust from areas of dry, loose, exposed soil. In the Doña Ana County area, high winds are most common January through April.

Dust storms can cause a number of serious health problems and can make some health problems worse. It can irritate the lungs and trigger allergic reactions, as well as asthma attacks. For people who already suffer from these conditions, dust can cause serious breathing problems. Dust can also cause coughing, wheezing and runny noses. Breathing large amounts of dust for prolonged periods can result in chronic breathing and lung problems.

Breathing too much dust can potentially harm anyone. However, the following groups run the highest risk of potentially being adversely affected by a dust storm.

- Infants, children, and teens
- Elderly

- Peoples with asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, or other respiratory conditions
- People with heart disease
- Pregnant women
- Healthy adults working or exercising vigorously outdoors

The best precaution to take in a dust storm is simply to avoid going outside. If you must go outside, spend as little time outside as possible and avoid hard exercise. Wearing some type of covering over the nose and mouth can provide some protection from large particles.

For more information on the risks associated with dust storms please see the NMED's website at www.nmenv.state.nm.us, click on " Air Quality Bureau", or contact [Helly Diaz-Marcano](#) at (505)524-6300.

For more information contact [Gail Cooke](#) in the NMED Air Quality Bureau, at 505-827-1032.